

## **Meeting of the Senior Sub-Cabinet Workgroup on Civic Engagement March 27, 2012**

Attending: Gabe Albornoz, Dept. of Recreation  
Carol Croll, Jewish Council for the Aging  
Leslie Marks, Senior Fellow, OCP  
Charles Smith, Health and Human Services  
Diane Vu, OCP  
Odile Brunetto, Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services  
Sara Gotbaum, MC Older Women's League  
Kathleen Meaney Stobie, OCP/Volunteer Center  
Kathleen Matthews, Upcounty Regional Services Offices  
Bruce Adams, OCP  
Austin Heyman, OCP  
Tom Endres, National Resource Center for Engaging Volunteers in the Aging Network

Invited but not attending: Molly Callaway, John Kenney, Karla Silvestre, Tim Warner, Phil Smakula, OASIS, Barbara Woodall, Micki Gordon, Miti Figueredo, Kenneth Hartman, Reemberto Rodriquez, Francine Jamin, Mike Greenhut, Daniel Koroma, Mary Anderson, Grace Whipple, Loraine Schack, Denise Stultz, Ana Lopez van Balen, Mildred Nance

### **Summary**

The Senior Sub-Cabinet Workgroup on Civic Engagement met on March 27 and heard a presentation by Tom Endres, Director of the National Resource Center for Engaging Volunteers in the Aging Network. Endres, one of the country's leading experts on senior civic engagement. He pointed to the need to rethink aging in order to respond to the 8000 Baby Boomers entering the over 65 world every day. Endres argued that we need to view aging as an asset and social capital and fundamentally change how we view volunteering, including everything from recruitment to management. The Resource Center will be offering webinars and looking for model programs, which can be replicated. —[www.agingnetworkvolunteers.org](http://www.agingnetworkvolunteers.org)

Endres pointed to the disconnect between what is being offered to the Boomers and what they want to do. We are not offering the right kind of opportunities, which will ensure these volunteers will stay. We need to rethink how we write job descriptions, that Boomers do not need as much guidance, and allow them to “take off”, which runs counter to some managers who want to exercise control. The Resource Center will be offering webinars and looking for model programs, which can be replicated. Among the aspects of these model programs will be their 1) effectiveness; 2) impact; 3) sustainability; and 4) replicability. ([www.agingnetworkvolunteers.org](http://www.agingnetworkvolunteers.org))

The Workgroup gave updates on programs, noting that some efforts had been diminished in recent times due to budget constraints. Gabe Albornoz, announced the opening of the White Oak Center, which will be the first center to have a senior wing. The Volunteer Center indicated that the RSVP and Pro Bono programs were operating at approximately the same level. However, new contacts with senior facilities have made possible additional engagement by residents on projects, which could be accomplished at the facility. JCA's Interages intergenerational programs and Career Gateway employment counseling program continue to involve significant numbers of older adults. Odile

Brunetto, the Area Agency on Aging Director, reported that nutrition programs for ethnic groups have significantly expanded. The Village movement, as well as many advisory groups, together with Senior Leadership Montgomery and the County Senior Fellows Programs were cited as good examples of senior engagement. Efforts to provide information on engagement opportunities through the Vital Living Network's "Navigator" and Aging and Disabilities' "Living and Thriving" publication, as well as the Commission on Aging's "Seniors Today" television show, were cited as important steps in fostering engagement.

## **Updates from members of the workgroup**

### **I. Volunteer Center**

RSVP 600 senior volunteers at 40 participating nonprofits. RSVP programs include:

A-Bone Builders – In partnership with HHS Aging and Disability Services, the program offers 13 free weight-bearing exercise classes to Montgomery County residents at 9 sites with a goal of reaching 150 seniors over a 12-month period.

B- RSVP/AARP Tax-Aide Program – In FY11 122 volunteers served over 13,800 volunteers hours to help over 4,200 clients at 29 locations throughout the County.

C-Pro Bono Consultant Program – While not solely a program for senior volunteers includes RSVP volunteers willing to take on a time-limited consulting project for an area nonprofit organization. Program operated at about the same level as prior years.

D-A new initiative to involve seniors at senior facilities has been initiated. Projects are being brought to the sites where seniors reside. Many were involved in Community Service Week last fall.

E- The Corporation for National Service is placing emphasis on programs involving veterans in the coming year.

F- The Neal Potter Paths of Achievement Awards will be given to two seniors this spring recognizing lifetime service to the community.

### **2-Health and Human Services**

#### **A- Nutrition Program**

FY12: 18 traditional meals sites for congregate lunch and 22 ethnic sites

FY10: 5,476 seniors served, FY11: 4,963... due to one time only ARRA funds available for meals in FY10 and census reductions in Adult Day Health Centers

700 persons received farmers' market coupons in FY11; redemption rate is

87 %; 600 persons enrolled in Meals on Wheels-stable number over the years. Meals on Wheels delivered by volunteers.

FY12 opening three new sites for congregate meals: Holly Hall (HOC) 20-25 persons started one month ago, Mid County Rec Center 25-30 persons started two weeks ago, fall opening at White Oak Community Center- 25-30 anticipated

FY12: 18 traditional meals sites for congregate lunch and 22 ethnic sites

#### **B-Community Review Program**

For FY12, the Community Review Program has conducted seven Student Community Reviews where Community Reviewers, many of whom are retired/semi retired seniors mentor University of Maryland Graduate Students for their Public Policy course to conduct the reviews. These seven reviews were conducted in the fall of 2011 and completed in December 2012. This spring, we will have a Community Review of Children, Youth and Family Services' Employment Services Program at the Gaithersburg site. For this review, three Community Reviewers on the panel.

### **3-Department of Recreation**

The first new Recreation Center with a 9,000 sq. ft. senior wing will be opened this spring at White Oak. The Executive's proposed FY13 budget contains funding for a full time staff position to manage programs. In general, participation rates at senior and community centers have declined somewhat due to the reduction in hours. There has been an increase in some neighborhood programs for ethnic communities.

While there has been an overall drop in participation due to the reduction of hours at all of the senior centers, there has been some increase from people just coming in to attend one class or program over the course of a program day. This trend began several years ago. Participants (with the exception of some of the frailer seniors that attend) are no longer coming and spending the entire day at the centers. They are becoming more selective of the programs and classes they attend. Part of this trend might be that more seniors are working longer- or have gone back to work part time since the economy in general (and the Stock Market specifically) began to slide 4-5 years ago. Many seniors had much of their retirement in stocks and bonds.

We have also seen an increase in the number of frailer seniors coming and spending the whole day at the centers. Many of them bring a private duty aide with them (which we require if they cannot take care of themselves) when they attend. This might be why there is some decline in the participation levels in the surrounding adult day care centers. It might be less expensive to hire an aide and bring them to our programs than to send them to day care... this is an issue we will have to address in the future if this trend continues as we are not staffed (or trained) to handle the frailer seniors in our communities. That was always a role/service that adult day care centers filled/provided. We try to gear our programs to the more active, independent senior.

### **4- Jewish Council for the Aging**

During the 2010-2011 school years with the help of 200 older adult volunteers, JCA Heyman Interages Center was able to reach 416 at-risk students through its intergenerational programs. Our volunteers clocked in 5,366 hours. More volunteers are needed in the schools. We need more staff to recruit, train and manage the volunteers in order for this to happen. 256 students of all ages regularly visited 230 frail and elderly adults living in assisted care facilities. We are trying to recruit volunteers to assist our Program Coordinator so we can expand these programs across the county.

50+ Employment Expo: Over 3,500 attended last year's Over 50 Employment Expo and 800 reported obtaining employment. The 50+ Employment Expo will be held on May 21, 2012.

Career Gateway: JCA's Career Gateway provides 30 hours of sophisticated skill-building instruction in resume writing, interviewing, time management, and job search strategies. The program served 130 seniors with one out of every four finding a job within 90 days.

Computer Docs: This program refurbishes used donated computers and then distributes them to seniors who cannot afford to buy computers.

SeniorTech: JCA operates Computer Training Centers that teach computer skills to adults 50+. 654 seniors took courses that range of courses from basic to advanced, using Windows based computers. All courses are taught by volunteer teachers and coaches.